

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 10614 301128Z

53

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1112

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 10614

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT ET

SUBJ: AFTERMATH OF SEPT 26 RALLY

REF: ADDIS ABABA 10527

1. SEPT 28 PASSED QUIETLY IN ADDIS DESPITE PREDICTIONS OF TROUBLE, AND CALM HAS CONTINUED SEPT 29. QUIET MAY BE ILLUSORY, HOWEVER, SINCE IT APPEARS SECONDARY SCHOOLS, MOST LIKELY SOURCE OF TROUBLE, DID NOT OPEN SEPT 28, AS SCHEDULED.

2. AFTER HOLIDAY HIATUS, SEPT 29 ETHIOPIAN PRESS REPORTED SEPT 26 RALLY AND INCLUDED COVERAGE OF ALL ANTI-CIA PLACARDS REPORTED REFTEL. PMAC FIRST VICE CHAIRMAN, MAJ. MENGISTU, WAS NOT QUOTED AS MAKING REFERENCE TO CIA IN HIS SPEECH AT RALLY NOR DURING SPEECH TO TEACHERS SAME DAY, ALTHOUGH HE CAME CLOSE WITH REFERENCES TO CHILE AND VIETNAM IN HIS PRESS STATEMENT OF SEPT 24 (ADDIS 10510). MEANWHILE, RUMOR HAS SPREAD THROUGHOUT CITY THAT ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT WAS FAKED IN ORDER TO RALLY MASSES AGAINST EPRP AND PERHAPS MAKE HERO OUT OF MENGISTU. WE HAVE NO HARD EVIDENCE, BUT JUDGING FROM OUR KNOWLEDGE OF SUBSEQUENT ACTIVITIES OF EPMG SECURITY PERSONNEL, WE INCLINED BELIEVE ATTEMPT WAS IN FACT REAL.

3. FUROR OVER CURRENCY EXCHANGE SEEMS TO HAVE DIED
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PAGE 02 ADDIS 10614 301128Z

DOWN AT LEAST IN ADDIS, AND WE HAVE HEARD LITTLE MORE

OF STRIKES. STORIES ARE WIDELY CURRENT OF ARRESTS AND EXECUTIONS. WIDESPREAD ARRESTS IN WAKE OF ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT WOULD NOT BE SURPRISING. WE ARE LESS CONFIDENT THAT THERE HAVE BEEN WIDESPREAD EXECUTIONS. POPULACE, HOWEVER, UNDOUBTEDLY BELIEVES STORIES WHEHTER THEY ARE TRUE OR NOT, AND THIS HAS ALMOST CERTAINLY CONTRIBUTED TO PRESENT STATE OF CALM. THERE HAVE BEEN NO REPORTS THAT ANY OF WOULD-BE ASSASSINS HAVE YET BEEN CAUGHT.

4. COMMENT: PMAC THROUGH RALLIES AND MEDIA HAS CERTAINLY SUCCEEDED IN CREATING IMPRESSION OF STRONG SUPPORT, PARTICULARLY AMONG WORKERS AND PEASANTS GROUPS FOR EPMG. IN PROCESS IT HAS LOST NO OPPORTUNITY TO FLAY EPRP, ALTHOUGH LACKING EVIDENCE, IT HAS YET TO ACCUSE EPRP OF BEING DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT. STUDENTS MAY STILL CAUSE TROUBLE WITH OR WITHOUT EPR ASSISTANCE, BUT AS OFTEN HAPPENS HERE, VIOLENCE OF LAST WEEK MAY BE FOLLOWED BY PERIOD OF RELATIVE CALM WHILE POPULACE ONCE AGAIN KEEPS ITS HEAD DOWN.
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